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866/DARPA-GC (866/327-7242)

November 13, 2003

For Immediate Release

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Organizers of Autonomous Robotic Ground Vehicle Challenge Announce Initial Team Selection

19 Teams Invited to March 8-12, 2004 DARPA Grand Challenge Qualification, Inspection and Demonstration Event; Up to Six Additional Teams May be Selected as a Result of Upcoming Site Visits.

Washington, DC – Organizers of next year's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Grand Challenge for autonomous robotic ground vehicles announced on November 5 that they have invited 19 teams (list attached) to participate in the Grand Challenge Qualification, Inspection and Demonstration (QID) event at the California Speedway, March 8-12, 2004.

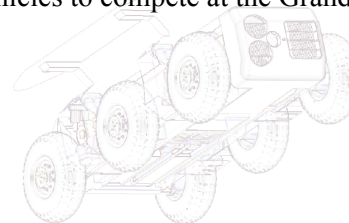
DARPA intends to invite up to six additional entrants to participate in the QID based on the results of site visits to be conducted in early December. The Grand Challenge attracted 106 applicants, 86 of which submitted technical papers by the October 14 deadline.

Of the 86 submitted papers, DARPA selected 19 as "completely acceptable" and invited those teams to the QID. An additional 26 teams were evaluated as "possibly acceptable" and eligible for a site visit that could qualify them for the final 6 slots at the QID. The major differences between the two groups were the state of their hardware development and technology integration, and the completeness of the technical approach.

"We were extremely impressed with both the quality and the quantity of applications we received. The group of 19 entrants selected for the QID comprises credible teams of all sizes and backgrounds, ranging from high school students to moonlighting, independent innovators to leading academic institutions," said Col. Jose Negron, Program Manager for the DARPA Grand Challenge.

At the QID event, the 25 teams will undergo a series of tests, which will determine the ability of the systems to autonomously navigate and avoid obstacles. A rigorous inspection will be conducted to ensure that the vehicles meet safety and performance requirements. At the conclusion of the QID event, DARPA will announce a final field of vehicles to compete at the Grand Challenge Field Test on March 13.

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“As part of the route development, DARPA worked closely with the appropriate state and local authorities to ensure that the Grand Challenge has no adverse effects on the environment and communities along the route.” said Negrón.

The Grand Challenge Field Test will cover a course between Los Angeles and Las Vegas, and the best performing vehicle will receive a prize of \$1 million. This challenge is intended to spur the accelerated development of autonomous robotic ground vehicle technology for military applications and is the first in a series of Grand Challenge events planned by DARPA.

DARPA is the central research and development organization for the U.S. Department of Defense. The Agency manages and directs basic and applied research and development projects for the Department of Defense, and pursues research and technology where the risk and payoff are both very high and where success may provide dramatic advances for traditional military roles and missions.

Teams with “Completely Acceptable” Technical Papers

Axion Racing, Westlake Village, CA
CyberRider, Capistrano, CA
Digital Auto Drive (Team DAD), Morgan Hill, CA
Insight Racing, Cary, NC
Palos Verdes High School Road Warriors, Palos Verdes Estates, CA
Rob Meyer Productions, Tucson, AZ
SciAutonics, Thousand Oaks, CA
SciAutonics II, Thousand Oaks, CA
Team Arctic Tortoise, Fairbanks, AK
Team Caltech, Pasadena, CA
Team ENSCO, Springfield, VA
Team LoGHIQ, Walden, NY
Team Overbot, Redwood City, CA
Team Spirit of Las Vegas (TSOLV), Edwards, CA
The Blue Team, Berkeley, CA
The Golem Group, Pasadena, CA
The ION Team, Oshkosh, WI
The Red Team, Pittsburgh, PA
Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA

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